

UNIVERSITY OF ST. MICHAEL'S COLLEGE



THE PROTOMARTYR OF SCOTLAND

FATHER FRANCIS OF ABERDEEN

BY

MATTHEW POWER, S.J.

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THE PROTOMARTYR OF
SCOTLAND

Nihil obstat

ERIC HANSON, S.J.

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THE "RED" FRIAR FRANCIS OF ABERDEEN

(From an old painting preserved at Palma, Majorca)

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A Glimpse of the Scottish Reformation, 1559

BY

MATTHEW A. POWER, S.J.

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THE PROTOMARTYR OF SCOTLAND

(A GLIMPSE OF THE SCOTTISH REFORMATION, 1559)

FOREWORD

SOME time ago I contributed several articles to the *Aberdeen Free Press*, bearing on the martyrdom of the Trinitarian or "Red" Friar, Francis, in the opening days of the Reformation in Aberdeen. All that I could gather about his death was scanty, but I am satisfied that there is no chance of adding to the information which I culled from very varied sources. These articles have been carefully revised, with much of the topography of Aberdeen eliminated, and with many improvements, I hope, introduced into the original monograph.

Scotland differs from England and Ireland in having but few martyrs for the faith, and she can ill afford to lose sight

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of any one of them. It is something, I submit, to rescue from oblivion the man whose full name must remain for ever unknown, but who was certainly the protomartyr of Aberdeen and of the Scottish Reformation, and, probably, the protomartyr of the whole of Catholic Scotland. In saying this I see no need of making an apology to the Scottish martyrologist of the seventeenth century, who figures largely and is criticised strongly in the accompanying pages.

The story of a lowly friar of the Trinity, about whom little or nothing is known except his death, must needs be "thin." It does not follow, I hope, that all the rest is padding. The condition of Catholicism in Aberdeen and the country generally is here treated as a setting to the martyrdom of the Trinitarian, but there is no attempt made to write a history of the Reformation in Scotland. That has yet to be done, and when it is done, the *Historie* of John Knox, the only one in the national possession, will be relegated to its proper place, among the myths and mendacities which have

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corroded the substance and poisoned the sources of historical truth.¹

This little work would never have been completed except for the generous assistance of the Father General of the Order of the Most Holy Trinity. A friend in Rome, who wishes to remain unknown, approached the General and elicited from him a large amount of information embodied in this sketch. With his own hand, the General wrote out a good deal about his Order and allowed me to make whatever use I liked of his communications. The almost dramatic discovery of the painting of the Aberdonian friar, in Palma, Majorca, was entirely due to the Father General and his brethren, who entered with zest into a long and arduous quest of the lost treasure of the Trinitarians.

¹ One great lesson can be drawn from Knox's *Historie*. Scottish Protestantism, like every other form of Protestantism, was the creation, not of any book, human or divine, but of the all-pervading spoken words of its preachers, with Knox himself as their perfect model (see p. 33). To the credit of Knox be it said, that though he treats the nuns of Scotland with derision, he never once charges them with immorality. This was left to Cardinal Sirmonetta, whose "Report," unsupported by any Protestant witness, is of little or no worth.

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My thanks are due to many others who have helped me in my labours on this virgin soil. I may be allowed to make special mention of Mr George Stronach, M.A., and Mr William Maxwell Cooper, both of the Advocates' Library, Edinburgh; of Mr G. M. Fraser, Librarian of the Public Library, Aberdeen, and of all the officials, ladies and gentlemen, of the same institution, who were ever ready with their skilful and untiring co-operation. In the same city I received nothing but kindness and help from the officials in charge of the precious MSS. stored in the "Town House," from Monsignor Meany, Cathedral House, and Father Russell, Librarian of Blairs College. To all these and many more I beg to tender my best thanks.

To the decree of Pope Urban VIII., mentioned in these pages,¹ I need hardly say I yield entire submission.

M. A. POWER, S.J.

EDINBURGH, PENTECOST, 1914.

¹ *Infra*, p. 53.

PROTOMARTYRS

THE last martyr for the Catholic faith in Scotland was the Ven. Father John Ogilvie, of the Society of Jesus. Was he Scotland's first martyr too? It is a strange question to ask. It is generally assumed that every country converted from heathenism to Christianity has had a protomartyr to boast of. Catholic England has had hers in S. Alban (A.D. 305). Catholic Ireland, strange to say, has never paid any cult to hers, though she undoubtedly had not one but many protomartyrs, who died at the hands of semi-pagan Pictish pirates and are explicitly mentioned in the document which is now universally accepted as the composition of S. Patrick himself. In the *Epistola ad Coroticum*, the Gaulish Latin of the Apostle of Ireland becomes indefinitely more barbarous than that of S. Gregory of Tours,

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and leaps into flame as the writer describes the slaughter of his beloved neophytes with the "chrism still glistening on their foreheads." The Scottish protomartyrs might have been S. Donnan and his fifty-one monks massacred by a band of pirates in A.D. 617 in the island of Egg on the west coast of Scotland,¹ but the community thus annihilated were Irishmen—that is, *Scoti* from Western Scotia or Ireland proper. In the eyes of some modern Scottish Catholics, S. Magnus of the Orkneys has a claim to be considered the protomartyr of Scotland, but it is forgotten that this chieftain labours under a triple disqualification: (1) he was certainly a Norseman, not a Scot in any sense, (2) he was slain a long way "furth" of Scotland, (3) he was simply a very good man foully murdered by a very bad one, about A.D. 1097.

Once upon a time Protestant England used to boast of her protomartyr, John

¹ See Reeves, *Adamnan*, p. 293.

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Rogers, an apostate priest burnt in London, in 1555, but she is now oblivious of the fact. Neither Presbyterian Scotland nor Protestant Ireland has ever given a martyr to the cause of the Reformation. It used to be the fashion with Presbyterian historians to award the palm of Presbyterian martyrdom to Patrick Hamilton, lay-abbot of Fern, in Ross-shire, who was burnt at the stake in St Andrews, in 1528, but at that early date it is as impossible to call Hamilton a Presbyterian as to invoke him as the pioneer of Tariff Reform or Christian Science. This unfortunate youth suffered for many heresies, including the stout denial of free will.

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THOMAS DEMPSTER AND
GILBERT BROWN

IN our search for the protomartyr of Catholic Scotland, care must be taken not to consult—for early times, at least—the incurable romancer and incorrigible liar, Thomas Dempster, the Catholic author of the *Ecclesiastical History of the Scottish Nation*, who died in exile in 1625. As false to truth as his wife was to him, Dempster seems to have cultivated his mythopœic faculty to an heroic degree. One reason why the year 1579 is doubted to be the year of his birth is that he himself gives it. According to him, Alcuin was a Scotsman, S. Boniface, the Saxon martyr and apostle of Germany, was another. Boadicea was not only a Scottish lady, but “the daughter of the King of the Scots,” and author of a book on *Military Orations*, another on *Infantry*, and four others on miscel-

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laneous subjects. To arrive at historical truth in all things, Dempster solemnly declares that he had read through twelve hundred authors, and adds that, being a born scholar, he had never ceased, through a strenuous life, to supplement the immense stores of erudition accumulated in his infancy. He was, he gravely informs us, not only the twenty-fourth son of his mother, *née* Jane Leslie, but one of a triplet, with five more brothers and sisters to follow, making a total of twenty-nine. His father, he says, was "prorex" or viceroy of Banff and Buchan, the truth being that Dempster *père* was the simple laird of Muresk, Auchterless and Killemont. On one important point we know with a certainty, not derived from Dempster but from contemporary documents, that he deviated into substantial truth, with a little colouring laid on. The point is this.

Dempster's uncle, William Leslie, was an officer in the army of James VI. of Scotland. Presented by the King, who

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thought everything ecclesiastical was in his gift, with the commendatorship of New Abbey (the famous "Sweetheart" Abbey), Leslie was apparently prompted by an uneasy conscience to convey the forfeited lands to a real monk, the holy and capable Cistercian of Dumfries, Gilbert Browne or Brown or Brounius or Brunus, who was most certainly the last Abbot of Catholic Scotland.

The only redeeming features one can find in Dempster are three: (1) his passionate love for his native land, (2) his sound mediæval Latinity, which the writer in the *Dictionary of National Biography* quaintly calls "thoroughly barbarous," (3) his reliance on the historical testimony of Abbot Gilbert Brown. And it is through this Cistercian writer, quoted by Dempster, that we obtain our first documentary introduction to the Protomartyr of Scotland. It is not Father Ogilvie, who was hanged for the faith in Glasgow, in 1616, but Friar Francis of

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the Order of the Most Holy Trinity, of Trinity church, Aberdeen, slain *in odium fidei* in December (probably 4th December¹), 1559.

That Gilbert Brown wrote much is certain, though not one of his works is to be found in the British Museum or in the Advocates' Library, Edinburgh.² That he wrote with learning and force against the leaders of the Scottish Reformation is clear from the extant and sulphurous language of John Welsche, "preacher of Christ's Gospel at Aire" (Ayr), the son-in-law of Knox and ancestor of Jane Welsh Carlyle. The book that lashed Welsche to fury in his "Reply to M. Gilbert Browne, priest," was probably entitled *Capita Fidei Controversa*. The highly educated and hard-working Abbot passed from theological to historical writing. This fact is attested by the late

¹ Camerarius gives this date. See p. 44.

² George Chalmers calls him "a person of learning and talents," *Caledonia*, v. 306. Cf. MS. Advoc. Lib. W. 2. 2.

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Father Griffin of New Abbey, a very competent local historian,¹ friend and fellow-labourer of the archæologist, the late Mr John Stuart of Aberdeen, by the late Rev. Mr Wilson, Presbyterian parish minister of New Abbey, an eloquent and accomplished lecturer on the history of "Sweetheart," and by Colonel Maxwell Witham, the present Catholic laird of Kirkconnell, New Abbey. On the variety and value of the works of Abbot Brown, the tradition of the Cistercians is unbroken.² His main historical work seems to have been called *Collectanea Historiæ Scotiæ*,³ grandiosely changed by Dempster into *Historia Labentis in Scotia Religionis Catholicæ*. There is no chance of its ever being found. Thus the history of the Scottish Reformation has

¹ *Catholic Directory for Scotland*, 1855.

² Cf. the Cistercian, Christopher Henriquez, *Menologium Cist.*, Antwerp, 1630; also the Trinitarian chronicler, Figueras, *Chron. Ord. SS. Trin.*, Verona, 1645; also Dugdale, *Monasticon*, London, 1661.

³ Figueras, *op. cit.* See p. 50 *infra*.

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fallen a prey to men like Knox and Buchanan, whose efforts at historiography are stigmatised by James VI., the royal pupil of Buchanan, as "infamous invectives and infamous libels."¹ The tradition in Dumfries holds persistently to this day that the *Opera Omnia* of Abbot Brown were publicly burnt in the market place of that town, soon after the arrest of the author through the dastardly lie of William, Lord Cranston, Captain of the Border.² Beloved by all the Catholics of Dumfriesshire, this confessor of the faith was spirited away to Blackness Castle on the Forth, thence to Edinburgh Castle, where he was kept in ward till he was shipped to France in 1605. He died in extreme poverty in Paris, 1610.³ Underlying the inevitable rhetorical flourishes

¹ *Basilikon Doron*, in *Op. Omn. Jacobi I.* [VI.], p. 176; ed. Bp. Montague, London, 1616.

² Calderwood's MS. in Advoc. Lib., 34, 1. 8.

³ Blairs College MSS., *Necrolog. Coll. Scot. Paris.* This date is authentic. Nearly all modern historians give the wrong year.

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of Dempster, the substance of the narrative of Gilbert Brown can be detected by the careful reader. The Abbot knew Aberdeen well and was probably a student at its University. Hence his narrative of the martyrdom of an Aberdonian friar may be accepted without reserve. "Many fragments of history," as Irving, the scholarly editor of Dempster, admits, are found in this myth-maker—and this is probably one of them.

THE TRINITARIAN FRIARS

BEFORE we give the Brown-Dempster account of the martyrdom in Aberdeen, it may be well to take a brief survey of the position of the Trinitarians on the Continent and in Scotland. In France they were called "Mathurins," not from S. John of Matha, but from the Church of S. Maturin, Paris, the mother-house of the French province. The popular

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Italian name for the brethren was "Maturini." The habit and scapular were white and the mantle black. The only piece of red stuff was the vertical beam of the long cross on the habit, the cross-bar being blue. Only in Great Britain were they called the "Red Friars," in contradistinction to their "White," "Black," and "Grey" brethren.¹ With the abundant material associated with the venerated names of S. John of Matha, S. Felix of Valois, S. Raymond of Pennafort, and James, King of Arragon, it is surprising to find the Trinitarians spoken of as "a military order" like the Knights Templar. In the early days of the thirteenth century, the friars undoubtedly sold themselves into captivity for the ransom of Christian slaves from the Paynim, but they never lifted mace or spear in pursuance of this charitable object. When there were no slaves to redeem from the Mussulmans, the brethren

¹ *i.e.* Carmelites, Dominicans and Franciscans.

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took to visiting the poor in the mediæval hospitals. This was certainly their work in Aberdeen. In Spain they were noted for their miracle-plays and their many ingenious devices for collecting alms, but there is nothing to show that they were ever burdened, like the other religious Orders, with wealth. In Scotland they were the poorest of all, and begged without any display. The income of their house in Aberdeen is shown by Mr P. J. Anderson,¹ University Librarian, to have been the lowest amongst all the religious bodies. In the minority of Mary Queen of Scots, Governor Arran gave alms to the "Blacks," "Whites" and "Greys" of Aberdeen, but forgot the "Reds."² At the Reformation the total rental of the Aberdeen property of the Trinity was £54, 1s. 1½d.³ The charters of this Aberdeen house, dating from 1318, are still in Aberdeen in

¹ *Aberdeen Friars.*

² *Accounts of Lord High Treasurer of Scotland, 1551-1559.*

³ Keith, *Affairs*, iii., 392.

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the custody of "the Master of Trades' Hospital,"¹ but, strange to say, have never been printed—and this in a city which is particularly rich in local historians. Nearly all the archives of the Scottish Red Friars were destroyed during the Reformation. I have found only two brief references to them in the *Register of the Great Seal of Scotland*. The name of the "minister"—the Trinitarian equivalent for "prior"—of Peebles has come down to us in a document signed by James VI. in 1580. It is Gilbert Brown, not, of course, the Cistercian of the same name. Only one Red friar, the minister of Failfurd, is known to have joined the coalition or faction that Knox loves to describe as "the Lords and Gentlemen of Scotland" or "the Congregation of Christ Jesus." His name has not been preserved.

Mr Ebenezer Bain is the only modern Scotsman who has given attention to the scanty record of the Trinitarians in

¹ Bain, *Merchant and Craft Guilds*, p. 151.

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Scotland. Following John Spottiswoode (not the Protestant Archbishop of Glasgow who sentenced Father Ogilvie to death), Bain thinks there were no fewer than thirteen houses of the Order in this country. The most celebrated were at Dornoch, Sutherlandshire ; Houston, near Linton ; Fairfield, in Ayrshire ; Peebles, Dunbar and Aberdeen. As early as 1272, Christina Mowbray or Fraser endowed the Houston friary, which flourished until its destruction by the English raiders. A year before he died of a broken heart,¹ James V., the great pilgrimage-maker in his penitent days, who often journeyed on foot from Holyrood, Edinburgh, to

¹ The "broken hearts" of both parents of Mary Queen of Scots are sometimes regarded as pieces of "Scottish sentimentality." James VI., the grandson of James V., distinctly mentions the broken heart of his grandfather, *Op. Omn. (supra)*, p. 162, and Buchanan, referring to the death of Mary of Guise in Edinburgh Castle, turns her broken heart into a beautiful bit of classical Latin. Hollinshed and Bishop Leslie, both contemporaries of hers, convey the same idea. Knox's remarks on her death are too disgusting to reproduce (*Hist.*, folio ed., p. 227).

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the Church of the Holy Rood, Peebles (now the Chambers' Institution), transferred to the Trinitarians there the munificent gift of the Lady Christina. About the year 1545 Peebles in turn felt the mailed fist of Henry VIII. and shared the fate of Houston.¹

TRINITY KIRK, ABERDEEN

ABERDEEN was the first place in Great Britain to greet the newly founded Trinitarians. It is an established fact that William the Lion, King of Scotland, as early as 1211, the year that the Order was solemnly approved by Pope Innocent III.,² petitioned his Holiness to send to Scotland a small band—probably seven—of the new institute. On their arrival, according to the old Scottish writers, their royal patron “gave them his palace.” No

¹ Cf. Bain, *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries in Scotland*, vol. xxii., p. 26 (1887-1888).

² *The Catholic Encyclopædia* gives the date as 1198.

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critical historian can be expected to accept literally this tale of the gifting of a splendid structure by a king of sumptuous tastes to a few undistinguished French-speaking friars, bound by the strict vow of poverty taken by the early Trinitarians. All that is meant by the gift seems to be that the Lion housed the strangers in his palace and soon after helped them to build, in close proximity to the "Kyngis gayttis," the oldest monastic house in Aberdeen. The first fathers of the Trinity in Scotland were beholden to their hot-headed and open-handed benefactor in other ways too. He infested them with the lands of Banchory and Cowlie, and most probably with a large section of the river frontage bounded on the west by the now hidden stream called the Denburn. The new friars were not ungrateful to their friend. They buried him with magnificent pomp at Arbroath, in 1214, and for generations attended the hospital of "S. Peter, Chief

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of the Apostles," founded by Matthew Kynnimond, Bishop of Aberdeen, in memory of the King.

Although my identification of the site of the little church of the Trinity where Friar Francis was killed by the mob, is called in question by some eminent Aberdonian antiquaries, or is said to run counter to the famous map of Aberdeen designed by Gordon, parson of Rothiemay, a hundred years after the Reformation, I am fairly confident that the following description is accurate :—

“(1) *The North aisle.* It was ‘in vico navium,’¹ *i.e.* it ran along the Shiprow.

“(2) *The South aisle.* It faced the sloping patch of land that ran down to the water’s edge and was called ‘the Trinity kirkyard.’ This bit of land was as much an integral part of the Aberdeen Green as was the contiguous area known as the kirkyard of the White friars or Carmelites.² Both kirkyards are now

¹ *Cartularium Eccles. S. Nic. Aberd.* (ed. Prof. Cooper), i. 189.

² Cf. *Extracts from the Council Reg. of the Burgh of Aberdeen*, 1st Sept. 1459.

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partly covered by the new goods station of the Caledonian Railway. The Trinitarians and Carmelites gone, the river Dee saw its opportunity, knocked down the palisades and encroached on the property of the dead. At high tide its waters partially submerged 'God's Acre' on the Green. Just forty-seven years after the burning of Trinity kirk and the 'slaughter' of Friar Francis, one Alexander Davidson sought and obtained leave of the Town Council to build a ship 'in the Trinity kirkyard.'¹ At low water, worse things than the Dee were revealed in the same kirkyard, 'quhilk is filthilie abusit by middyngis.'² Evidently the Trinitarians had ceased to dam the flowing tide and their dead had by this time found a watery grave.

"(3) *The West front.* Here the Shiprow and the Green become practically one. The former did not, of course, end here, for being once identical with what is now known as Trinity Lane, it ran on west towards the Carmelite section of the Green. The west door of the old Trinity kirk was admirably situated to catch the fisher folk as they left their nets to dry on the green slope of the kirkyard and felt indisposed to breast the brae that separated them from the old parish kirk of S. Nicholas, patron of sailors and fishermen, or to face the 'quality' that might have stared and sniffed at their fishy clothes at Sunday Mass in the great church above. The bonnie river is

¹ Forbes Leslie, *The Irvines of Drum*, p. 79.

² *Ibid.*

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now a long way off the west door of the Trinitarian church. Many of the stones about show signs of having been turned and polished in the lathe of the old estuary. In the sixteenth century the Dee was close up to Trinity kirk, but in the nineteenth, it was diverted from its natural course and thrust to the south to make room for the new docks. The reformed river has had no such indignity offered it in its upper reaches, and still swirls with delight under the Auld Brig o' Dee and sings the praises of Bishops Elphinstone and Dunbar, the pious founders of the stately erection, and Alexander Galloway, priest and architect, and Thomas French, master-mason, now lying in S. Machar's kirkyard. Needless to say, there is not a vestige of the west door of Trinity kirk left. Many feet above the spot it once occupied, we now see a storehouse for bananas, and flush with it, a depôt for 'Starley' cycles. These business premises make excavation impossible. There is nothing for it but to use the X-rays of memory and plunge a couple of fathoms below the present level which was partly silted up by the old Dee and then still further raised by the work connected with the construction of the Upper Dock. The banana store, with its ponderous wooden ceiling picked with gold, was once occupied by the Catholic Apostolic church, while the cycle depôt was (1) a Presbyterian chapel, (2) a music hall, (3) a wee zoo. Above ground, not a stone is left on a stone in the church where the martyr of Aberdeen fell.

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“(4) *The East front.* This is hard to find, but I fancy it bordered a little ‘vennel’ that once ran ‘fra the Shipraw to the Grene.’”¹

In 1794, the very last stones of the charred and wasted gables of the old Trinity kirk were removed and the ground prepared for the coming of bananas and cycles.

THE FAITHFUL AND THE FAITHLESS IN ABERDEEN

TRANSLATING from the picturesque Latin of Dempster, I now give his account of the death of

“FRANCIS, MARTYR, MONK OF THE
MOST HOLY TRINITY FOR THE RE-
DEMPTION OF CAPTIVES

“When the heretics of Aberdeen, maddened with incendiary fury, attacked his monastery, he wished to admonish them with saving words. The response was, first to stab him through the abdomen, then to hurl his body down the stairs, lastly when it was pierced with many a wound, they flung it into the fire.

¹ *Extracts*, etc. (*supra*), for 21st April, 1558.

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“Thus this blameless and saintly man, who was more truly a silent witness than an active champion, amid the rout and destruction of holy things, yielded up, in defence of the truth, the life that was to be exchanged for a better one.

“(GILBERT BROWN). He died in the year 1559.”¹

In four different passages in his voluminous works, Dempster repeats, with substantial sameness, the story of the martyrdom. In one place this uncritical scribe has given a precisely similar account of the death of a martyr whom he calls “Patrick.” The present Superior-General, or, according to Trinitarian terminology, the “Minister-General” of the Order of the Most Holy Trinity,² saw at a glance that Dempster had divided the victim of the sacrilegious riot in Aberdeen into two, the one the true “Francis,” the other

¹ *Hist. Eccles. Gent. Scot.*, Bannatyne Club, tom. 1., p. 289.

² Its headquarters are at the Basilica of San Crisogono, Rome. This church was given to the Order of the Most Holy Trinity by Pius IX. in 1856. Both at S. Crisogono and S. Carlino, the Trinitarians were under the impression that the old painting of their Scottish martyr was still in Rome. See p. 53.

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the mythical "Patrick." The same Father leaned to the belief that the real martyr was "minister" or superior in Aberdeen, but he overlooked the fact mentioned by Mr P. J. Anderson, that this post was filled at the time by a friar of the name of Whitcross, of whom nothing is known. My own conjecture is that the Trinitarian murdered and burnt in his kirk bore the double name, in conformity with the general practice of his Order, of Friar Francis of S. Patrick. Anyhow, Dempster's trick of "duplication" is manifest. There was one and only one man in Aberdeen who died at the hands of a Reformation mob.

The history of the rise, progress and triumph of the Reformation in Aberdeen has yet to be written. It will begin with John Marshall and a few other school-masters who had imbibed the "New Learning" from the Continent, and encouraged the importation of Lutheran books, especially the famous *Babylonian Captivity* of the German Reformer. The

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efforts of James V. and his Catholic parliaments to keep out these imports proved abortive.¹ But Aberdeen, with its four thousand inhabitants, followed the rule of every "reformed" town in Christendom. It was never won by the printed page of Protestantism. It fell a prey to the Protestant preaching of apostate Catholic monks, especially two Dominican friars, ex-chaplains of the Lord Governor, Arran. Their inflammatory and brawling style of speech produced in the north-east of Scotland the same "No Popery" riots caused by the Knoxian preachers who had lashed to iconoclastic fury the "rascal multitudes," as Knox calls them, of Dundee, Perth, St Andrews and Edinburgh. As early as 1544, fifteen years before Knox landed at Leith to take the command of the Reformation, Thomas Branche and Thomas Cussing were

¹ Thomson, *Acts Parl. Scot.*, II., 342. In the Act of 14th June, 1535, Scotland is declared to be non-heretical and "clene of all sik filth and vice," *ibid.*

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arraigned before the civil courts on the charge of "hanging" in mockery the statue of the inoffensive S. Francis of Assisi.¹ The iconoclasm, which in this one instance was unaccompanied by the lust of loot, was a portent of the deeds that emptied every niche in the Collegiate Church of S. Giles, Edinburgh, and of the blind savagery that was to turn the altar-filled aisles of S. Nicholas, Aberdeen, into a naked barn. So far advanced were the principles of the Reformation under the Catholic-Protestant-Catholic-again-Protestant-again Lord Governor of Scotland, James Hamilton, Duke of Chatelherault and Earl of Arran, that it is as true to say of Queen Mary of Guise as of her daughter, Mary Queen of Scots, that she never had a chance against the men who were first rebels against the House of Stewart and then religious reformers bent on booty. In 1543, the Governor of Scotland, on pretending to turn again to "popery,"

¹ *Extracts*, etc., for 1st December, 1544.

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dismissed his renegade Catholic chaplains with instructions to preach the new Gospel in Aberdeen. The same traitor, in 1557, when Mary of Guise had superseded him as Regent, led her Scottish forces against "the auld ennemie of Ingland," sat down before the walls of Wark in Northumberland, saluted the besieged Englishmen in the castle and galloped with his men home again.¹ Thus he broke the heart of his Queen, taught Lord Huntly of Aberdeen, his kinsman by marriage, to play the traitor, and stamped on the armies of the once independent kingdom of Scotland the worst stigma in the military annals of Great Britain. The main abettors of the Reformation in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire were : (1) the preachers sent by Hamilton, (2) Huntly, Lord Lieutenant of the North,

¹ The whole of this disgraceful episode is related in the contemporary *Talbot Papers*. All Scottish historians, from Knox onwards, slur it over, but the story as told by the English commanders is unquestionably true. It is given by Lodge, *Illustrations*, etc., i. 290 *sqq.* Knox's mutilated version of it is accompanied by a coarse gibe. *Hist.*, folio ed., p. 93.

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and ex-Provost of Aberdeen, the nearest approach that Scotland has ever seen to human almightiness, the betrayer of the two Queen Marys,¹ and the signatory of the strong Protestant Profession of Faith before the walls of Leith (27th April 1560),² (3) his brother, William Gordon, Bishop of Aberdeen, waster of Church property and chronic debauchee, (4) Thomas Menzies, Provost of Aberdeen, the mealy-mouthed Anglo-Scottish trafficker with England's friends and Scotland's foes, the consummate hypocrite who denounced the threatened invasion of his town by the Reformers he

¹ The high treason of Huntly, which led to his well-deserved punishment by Mary Queen of Scots, is proved beyond doubt by Knox in his *Historie* (folio ed., p. 221), the *Sadler Papers* (ii. 229, ed. Clifford), the *Council Reg. of the Burgh of Aberdeen*, January, 1560 (see note on p. 40), Pitscottie, *Hist. Scot.*, p. 210, Calderwood, *True Hist.*, p. 13. The eye-witness of the siege of Leith in Hollinshed's *Chronicles* is apparently of the same opinion. Still many Catholics in the north cling to the legend of his loyalty. Hill Burton's long-winded invective on Mary's cruelty to this faithful subject of hers only excites the mirth of the modern historian (see his *Hist. Scot.*, iv. 53).

² Keith, i. 273.

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was hand and glove with, then, on the 29th December 1559, gave the rebels safe conduct and sure guidance, in full view of his own estates, over the Blue Hill, across the Auld Brig o' Dee, already denuded of its Madonna chapel, down the Hardgate and Windmill Brae, across Bow Brig, up Back Wynd Stairs (once part of the present Back Wynd), until they reached their objective of S. Nicholas and began the work, which Menzies and Huntly¹ could have stopped at a word, of tearing down the costly leaden roof for sale in the Flemish markets. A few years after this feat of violence and duplicity, in which Menzies had the open or tacit support of the *élite* of Aberdeenshire — the many Gordons of Strathbogie, the Burnetts of Leys, the Irvines of Drum, the Forbeses

¹ Huntly is commended by his partisan, Bishop Leslie, for having stopped, in mid course, a similar act of vandalism at S. Machar's Cathedral, Old Aberdeen. As if Huntly could not have stayed the beginning of such an outrage! The Lords had got all the lead they wanted for exportation. Much of it was afterwards lost at sea, off the Girdleness.

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of the several Echts (the incendiaries of the kirk of Echt), the Lumsdens of Wardhouse, the Leslies of Balquhain, the Arbuthnots, and Keiths and Udneys and Mowats and Frasers and Cheynes and Ogilvies and Bannermans and Buchans—the said Provost who had been forty years in office, threw off the mask and made open profession of the “newe religioun” in a highly flavoured Protestant letter to the General Assembly of 1567.¹

It took some time for “sum induellaris of this burgh”² to see that the invaders of Aberdeen from the south were getting too much out of the spoliation of all the religious houses of the town. When they realised the loss to themselves and saw the folly of parting with the spoils to “strangeouris,” the canny Aberdonians, re-

¹ Written on 12th July, 1567 (Keith, iii. 175). The bearer was Adam Heriot, apostate Augustinian friar and first minister of Aberdeen. He was given a black suit and other necessities of the value of £30, with £10 for house rent added (Kennedy, *Annals*, i. 114).

² *Extracts*, etc., for 4th January, 1560.

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presented by the city fathers, determined to keep “sklayttis [slates], tymmir [timber], and leid [lead]” for themselves. They then called for a public “roup” (auction), in which they were the only bidders. The great bulk of the Church plate and ornaments was knocked down to the wealthy Patrick Menzies.¹ All the churches in Aberdeen were now dismantled and looted. It was better, from a financial point of view, to treat them thus than to commit them to the flames like Trinity kirk.

In the history of the Scottish Reformation, most of the Provosts joined in the rebellion against their lawful Queen, like Halliburton, Provost of Dundee, Ruthven, Provost of Perth, Learmonth, Provost of S. Andrews, and Moscrip, Provost of Jedburgh, but in the matter of the cult of the “bawbee” and religious cant, Provost Menzies of Aberdeen and his Council are an easy first. The greedy and double-faced bailies who stole the

¹ *Extracts*, etc., for 6th January, 1561.

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“silver euchrysts” and the “velvet kaips” (copes), who were never tired of professing allegiance to the “Quenes autoritie” and yet equipped forty men of war to assist Huntly in driving her out of her last stronghold in Leith,¹ stand out conspicuously even in an age when high treason against the State and abjuration of the old faith were practically universal among the “better” classes.²

Nor can it be said of the fathers of the Town Council, who fell off one by one from the faith, that they succeeded in reforming the morals of the people of Aberdeen and district. Thirteen years after the burning of Trinity kirk, out of eighty children, thirty-five were illegitimate.³ In the one year, 1597, twenty-four witches were burnt at the stake in

¹ *Extracts*, etc., for 11th March, 1560. The cost to the burgh of the forty men was £400 Scots. The “capitane” in command was Lord Huntly, who had a little standing army of his own besides these municipal reinforcements.

² See Appendix B.

³ Kennedy, *Annals of Aberdeen*, i. 103.

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Aberdeen alone,¹ the grand total for the whole of Reformed Scotland being about four thousand.² The records of the Kirk-Sessions of Aberdeen and Strathbogie are, to a very large extent, much too unsavoury for modern publication.

The sacking and burning of churches was not nearly so prominent a feature in the Reformation of the north-east of Scotland as in the campaign personally conducted by Knox farther south. The scurrilous attacks made by the same Reformer on the character of Mary of Guise find no echo in Aberdeen. The cry of "Idolatry" was not taken up in Aberdeen as it was in Edinburgh. But for systematic swindling and elaborate trickery, no one of the municipal bodies of Scotland can compare with the Council headed by Thomas Menzies of Pitfoddels, and David Mar, Treasurer of Aberdeen.

¹ *Selections, Eccles. Records, Aberdeen* (Spalding Club), p. xxxii.

² Watt, *Aberdeen and Banff*, p. 199.

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In the official documents of that city,¹ as might be expected, there is no mention of the burning of the kirk of S. Fincan, Virgin, Echt, in 1558, or of the Trinity church, Aberdeen, in 1559. Much can be gleaned from contemporary records of the pathetic surrender of the Grey friars under their last Guardian, John Roger, to the Town Council on the afternoon of 29th December 1559,² when the Corporation of Aberdeen undertook to save them from “the Gentlemen of Angus and Mearns” who were on their way from the south to replenish the war-chest of the Keiths by the pillage of the great kirk of S. Nicholas. A good deal of information is also given about the equally interested motives of the bailies in “rescuing” the Black and White friars from the raiders, and keeping “onspoulzet”³ (un-despoiled), the valuable

¹ There is dreadful confusion in the printed copy of the *Extracts* between the years 1559-60.

² Moir Bryce, *Grey Friars in Scotland*, ii. 233.

³ *Extracts*, etc., for 8th January, 1560.

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monastic “biggings” (buildings) for the “common weill” and for purposes of “hospitalitie” and for the “puir” (poor) who now for the first time in the history of Aberdeen begin to swarm; but of the Red friars of the same “guid toun,” called by Dunbar (the sweet singer of pre-Reformation days),

The Lamp of bewtie, bountie, and blythnes,
there is not a word in the Records, MS. or printed. The murder of the friar was a grave blot on the civil authorities, and from the blackened ruins of the kirk where he perished, there was nothing for the Corporation to filch or seize or “protect.” The chiefest of the sinners of Aberdeen, because the most hypocritical, were the Provost,¹ Treasurer and Council—always excepting Gilbert Collison the younger, who was as staunch as the one fearless and outspoken priest, Anderson, Vice-Principal of the University.

¹ The *amende* of the Menzies family came when the Blairs estate was handed over to the Catholic Church in 1829. Long before this they had returned to the old faith.

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SCOTTISH REFERENCES TO FRIAR FRANCIS

IT must not be thought that Gilbert Brown and Thomas Dempster are the only authorities for the death of the Red friar of Aberdeen.

(1) A much more trustworthy writer than Dempster is David Camerarius, the martyrologist, whose name is unaccountably omitted in Tanner and the *Dictionary of National Biography*. His reputation as an historian might well be established by his concise and unbiassed narrative of the triumphant march of Knox, and the Lords whom Mary of Guise in her letters to France frequently calls "ces rebelles," on Edinburgh in the summer of 1559, and of their incessant "purges" of "idolatrous" places of worship on the way. In his book, dedicated to Charles I.,¹ he gives an account of the death of Friar Francis,

¹ *De Fortitudine Scotorum*, p. 201, Paris, 1631.

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probably based on Abbot Brown and independent of Dempster's additions. The oratorical intentions of the doomed friar happily disappear in Camerarius, but he adds the very likely incident that the skull of Francis was fractured as he was being dragged down the stairs. With the door blocked by the infuriated rabble, the first impulse of the hunted man would have been to fly up the tower and gain the roof.

(2) Far and away the best non-Catholic interpreter of the unvarying tradition of Aberdeen, is Alexander Keith, Episcopalian minister in that town in 1732. His summing up is terse and business-like : " Francis, one of the fryars here while the monastery was a-burning, was at first stabbed by the rabble, then thrown down stairs and at last barbarously burnt." ¹ Passing over Dempster, Keith prefers to refer to Camerarius.

¹ *View of the Diocese of Aberdeen*, ed. Dr Joseph Robertson in his *Collections*, etc., p. 204.

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(3) Kennedy, the well-known Protestant historian of Aberdeen, is equally explicit. "Friar Francis, one of the brethren in attempting to make his escape, was stabbed and his body thrown into the fire and burnt."¹ Kennedy refers in the vaguest way to a MS. in the Advocates' Library, Edinburgh, which cannot now be traced.

(4) The truth of the old tradition is not questioned by the most eminent of the Aberdeen archæologists, Dr Joseph Robertson.²

(5) Mr P. J. Anderson, the present Librarian of the University of Aberdeen, seems to endorse the received account.³

(6) The particularly cautious Aberdonian, Mr Watt, who died in 1906, writes: "The Trinity monastery was set on fire and a wounded monk, Friar Francis, perished in the flames"⁴

¹ *Annals of Aberdeen*, ii. 68.

² Robertson, *loc. cit.*

³ *Aberdeen Friars*, p. 11.

⁴ *Aberdeen and Banff*, p. 14.

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(7) The last scholar in Aberdeen to refer to the tragedy is Mr G. M. Fraser, Librarian of the Public Library of the city.¹

It is the cause that makes the martyr. If the hatred of the old faith of Scotland prompted the destruction of the hundreds of churches and chapels that were spoiled and wrecked during the raids of the Lords and the riots of the scum of the population during the Scottish Reformation, the man who died at his post in Trinity kirk may well be considered to have fallen a victim to "heretical fury"; and the right of Catholics to do him private honour as a martyr in the cause of the faith can hardly be challenged.

CONTINENTAL EVIDENCE ON THE MARTYRDOM

ONE must know a religious Order from inside and mark the care with which its

¹ *The Green*, etc., p. 11.

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menologies and martyrologies are compiled to realise the pains taken before any one of the members who has seemingly died in defence of the Catholic faith is honoured as a true martyr of Christ. If there is to be any proclamation of martyrdom, addressed to the Church Universal, it is needless to say that even more elaborate precautions are observed by the Roman Congregation concerned in the investigation.

The uniform practice is to follow scrupulously the canons of evidence before the emotional aspirations which tend towards some new object of veneration are allowed to have play.

For about seven hundred years the Order of the Most Holy Trinity has been in existence, and during that long span no bogus saint or martyr has been invoked in its ranks, and no brother who has given his life for any cause, short of the noblest, has received from his too credulous or over-complimentary brethren the aureole of martyrdom.

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It is about three hundred and fifty-five years since the Red friar of Aberdeen was slain in the Trinity kirk, and through that period his fellow-religious have saluted him as a martyr. It were rash to say they have erred.

From among the authorities, Latin, Italian and Spanish, I select the following:—

(1) The first is Father John Figueras, or Figueras Carpi of Verona, author of what is a *magnum opus* in Trinitarian literature,¹ born about thirty years after the death of the friar of Aberdeen. With the effusive detail of the seventeenth-century title-page, this good Latinist and diligent searcher in the archives of the Order in France, Italy, Spain and Portugal, describes himself as “Minister-Provincial and Vicar-General through England, Scotland and Ireland.” It is doubtful whether he ever landed in the British Isles, but this honorary title was given him, it would seem, in recog-

¹ *Chron. Ord. SS. Trin. de Redempt. Captiv.*, Verona, 1645.

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nition of the deep interest he took in the one Trinitarian whose laurels were won in Great Britain. The authority he quotes for "the passion and death" of Francis, is the Cistercian Abbot, Gilbert Brown above mentioned.¹ He appears to have actually seen the works of this writer, during one of his visits to Paris, for he quotes as if from sight, chapter and verse of the *Collections for the History of Scotland*.²

(2) About 1670, though the date is uncertain, there appeared in Rome an Italian work by an anonymous Trinitarian author.³ The writer, discoursing on the Anglo-Scottish Lords and gentlemen who levied war on their lawful Queen, makes the shrewd guess that they were all working for the "pessima tiranna Elisabetta." He little knew how near he was to the conclusion of modern historians, that

¹ See p. 18.

² The *Collectanea* mentioned on p. 18. Figueras quotes its chapters, IV. and IX.

³ *Origine e Instituzione del Sacrosanto e Celeste Ordine della SSS. Trinita*, etc.

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without the English gold parsimoniously dealt out to the rebels by Elizabeth and Secretary Cecil, there would have been no effective appeal to the greed of the Scottish aristocracy, whose hands, according to Knox, were "liberallie anoynted,"¹ and no Scottish Reformation at all.

(3) Another Spanish Trinitarian follows, as the anonymous author of a work held in esteem by his Order.² With an extraordinary accuracy, which shows that he had had access to some Scottish Trinitarian records, he lays the scene of the martyrdom in "Aberdon la Nueva"—that is "New" as distinguished from "Old" Aberdeen. The distinction is still in daily use in the "Granite city." Stranger still, he rightly locates the "New" town on the "river Den." "Den" cannot be the Spanish for the river Dee, but represents the burn or brook still called "Den" or "Denburn."

¹ Knox, *Hist.*, folio ed., p. 35.

² *Coronada Historia*, Granada, 1697.

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(4) The next witness of the same Order is Father Ignatius of S. Antony.¹ To his narrative of martyrdom he appends some interesting information about a famous picture of "this venerable man."

(5) Yet another Spanish member of the Order, Father Francis de la Vega et Toraya, uncanonically canonises his Aberdonian brother under the title of "S. Francis of Aberdeen."²

(6) Father Augustine of S. John the Baptist calls the Aberdonian by the more guarded title of "Blessed Francis," and gives a collect in his honour, with the particulars of his martyrdom, and the wonders wrought by his picture, rather clumsily interwoven.³

It looks as if the Order of the Holy Trinity has practised an "immemorial cult" of their Aberdeen brother.

¹ *Necrolog. Religiosorum*, etc., Aix, 1707.

² *Vida del Ven. Siervo de Dios, fray Simon de Roxas*, Madrid, 1715.

³ *Cultus Sanctorum Ord. SSS. Trin.*, Lemberg, 1738. For the prayer, see Appendix A.

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THE PICTURE AT PALMA

It is a far cry from Aberdeen to Palma, the still more beautiful and far more ancient town of Majorca, yet it is here and not in Scotland that we are to look for the last piece of evidence regarding the protomartyr of Aberdeen and possibly of all Scotland.

It is an old oil painting of no artistic merit, first located in Rome, then in Valladolid, and now in the hands of the Oratorian Fathers who have succeeded to the church once served by the Trinitarians of Palma. Obedient to the Bull of Pope Urban VIII. (1634) against premature popular canonisation, the present holders of the old Trinitarian treasure are careful, both in act and hagiography, to give no handle to pietistic excess and are resolved, pending the final decision of the Holy See, not to allow the picture to be removed from the private sacristy into the public church.

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There can be little doubt that the man who inspired the artist, but gave him no data except the fact of martyrdom to work upon, was no other than Father Figueras, the Spanish Trinitarian more than once referred to, and the champion of the Red friars of "England, Scotland and Ireland."

The legend attached to the picture is rather bold and seems to indicate that Figueras set his artist to work before the issue of the above Bull—perhaps about 1630.

S. FRANCISCUS
ALBERDONENSIS
MARTIR

The nationality of the painter is clear. Not only is the "l" beloved of the Spaniard introduced into the local adjective "Aberdonensis," but "Martir," the Spanish way of spelling the Latin "Martyr," enforces the same conclusion. It is equally clear that the artist is not

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Figueras, who, like all Latinists of his day, wrote "Martyr," but an uneducated man, probably a Trinitarian lay-brother, who caught the sound of "Martyr," and wrote it down as above. The painter seems to have been not only a Spaniard, but a resident in the Roman house of the Order. The two Trinitarian writers above referred to are agreed that the picture, which was afterwards credited with miraculous powers, was painted in Rome; and truly enough the work bears distinct traces of the Roman Renaissance. The pug-nosed angel is, of course, there, holding a highly convoluted shield that might be Carrara marble or might be plaster of Paris. The conventional palm branch is gracefully poised in the right hand of the martyr, and the drapery both of the habit and the mantle is easy and flowing. Part of the red-blue cross is still distinctly visible in the fading picture. As might be expected in a purely "fancy" design, there is nothing Scottish in the whole conception.

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The man is a tall, good-looking Spanish youth, with a luxuriant crop of hair which conceals the neo-Roman tonsure. Instead of the prosaic Scottish "whinger," the likeliest instrument of his death, there is a costly Spanish sword-handle worthy of the Toledo blade buried deep in the left breast of the martyr.

It is almost impossible that anything can be added to this last link in the chain of evidence regarding the claim of the Trinitarian to the martyr's crown in Scotland. Perhaps it is enough.

APPENDIX A

COLLECT IN HONOUR OF FRIAR FRANCIS

*Translated from the Latin of
Father Augustine of S. John the Baptist.*¹

(Not authorised for public use.)

O Blessed Francis, Martyr, who in thine attempt to withstand the impious and sacrilegious raid of heretics on thy religious house, wert wounded and dragged down the stairs, and with thy head cleft didst give up thy soul to heaven as a victim; thou who hast won this favour from God, that thy picture, painted in Rome, with the laurels of martyrdom added, when laid on the heads of the possessed, has put the demons to flight, obtain for us, by thine intercession, deliverance from the snares of the devil.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

¹ See p. 52.

APPENDIX B

THE MARTYRS AND NON-MARTYRS OF THE SCOTTISH REFORMATION

AFTER some research, I am inclined to think that, including, by a little chronological stretch, the name of Father Ogilvie in the list, we cannot ascribe to Scotland more than the three following undoubted martyrs for the Catholic faith in the days of the Reformation :—

(1) Father Francis, Trinitarian, died in Aberdeen, 4th December,¹ 1559.

(2) Father Robson, secular priest, died in Glasgow, 4th May,¹ 1574.

(3) Father John Ogilvie, Jesuit, died in Glasgow, 28th February,¹ 1616.

Of the first, enough has been said.

The second is known only through one short phrase of an unknown burgess of Edinburgh, the author of the extraordinarily accurate and strictly contemporary *Diurnal*

¹ These dates are, of course, "old style."

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of *Occurrents*. Robson was hanged "for saying of Mass."¹ To those acquainted with this close observer and faithful recorder of events, this one authority, the only one available, will seem enough to establish the claim of the priest, Robson, to the crown of martyrdom.²

Of Father Ogilvie, S.J., it is enough to say here that he is already declared "venerable" by the Catholic Church. The account of his trial and conviction is given in Pitcairn's *Criminal Trials*, and deserves to be reprinted in full.

It is quite possible that there is a fourth Scottish martyr in the person of Father John Black, of the Order of Preachers, sometime confessor of Mary Queen of Scots, and murdered by a mob in the Cowgate, Edinburgh, in 1566.

The task of vindicating Friar Black

¹ *Diurnal*, p. 341, quoted by Lang, *Hist. Scot.*, ii. 254.

² Buchanan gives the date of the execution of Robson as 1571, and is wrong by three years. There is a shocking slander on the priest as a breaker of the seal of Confession in the same author, *Hist. Scot.*, Aikman's trans., ii. 600.

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from the hideous charges of Knox and Randolph has been undertaken with exceptional courage by Father Devas of the Order of Preachers¹ and will seem to many readers to have been accomplished with signal success.

No layman and no woman is known to have been executed for the Catholic faith during the Scottish Reformation. It was different in England. In Scotland it was not the lack of will to kill papists²; it was the want of material for the hangman. There is no doubt that to escape death it was absolutely necessary for a very large number of Scottish Catholics, lay and clerical, to fly to the Continent. This they did—"ob Catholicæ fidei ardorem," is the bitter remark on one of

¹ In the *American Catholic Quarterly*, July, 1910.

² In his emphatic teaching of the stern duty of the civil government to punish these "idolators with death," Knox never wavered. His most explicit and savage utterance on the point emanated from Geneva in 1558; *The Appellation of John Knox*, &c., Laing, *Knox*, IV., 507.

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them by the famous printer and scholar, Aldus Manutius. In England there was a large exodus too, but the Elizabethan Government could never feel sure that the exiles would not return with new recruits for the mission field. Hence the need, which was not felt in Scotland, of a large army of paid pursuivants and spies. The immediate peril of death over, two movements become apparent among Scottish Catholics. Many exiles returned home, and many of the resident Catholics who had conformed to the new religion came back to the fold under a storm of persecution not much less bitter than death. Hence the impossibility of the attempt made by some Scottish historians to draw up two lists, first of Catholics who had lapsed, secondly, of those who remained staunch. Of many families as well as of many individuals it is equally true to say that they were Catholics and Reformed by turns. When the local bishops had all disappeared, along with the vast bulk

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of the local secular clergy and all the religious bodies, and when the last man of the fighting column which had done so much to relight the dying embers of Catholicism was recalled by the General of the Jesuits, the old religion died of inanition, and the triumph of the Protestant Reformation was secured. It took a long time to come. To say with Froude that on the morrow of the parliamentary abolition of the Papacy and the Mass (August, 1560), Scotland awoke and found herself Protestant, is a travesty of history and a denial of human nature. Very slowly the triumph of the Presbyterian form of Protestantism came, but when it came, never, in the annals of religious strife in Europe, was there a conquest more complete or a rout more shattering. Leaving a few patches of the west inviolate, the storm of victory swept along its unresisted course from Kirkwall of the Orkneys, where Bishop Adam Bothwell openly preached the doctrines

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of the Reformation, to the braes of Galloway where Bishop Alexander Gordon was stingily paid by the new Kirk of Scotland for his services to the cause. Compared to the continental area covered by the Protestant tide, Scotland was small, but no part of Europe, large or little, was so cleared of Catholicism as this western spot. On the Continent, Catholicism was being constantly borne down and as constantly springing up. The floods of Lutheranism and Calvinism were being ever broken up by the irrepressible peaks and importunate islands of Catholicism that refused to be long submerged; but in Scotland the waters prevailed, and the land lay quiescent and crushed under their weight. The Catholic Church was practically wiped out, "as a man wipeth a dish, wiping it and turning it upside down,"¹

And mountainous error was too highly heaped
For truth to overpeer.

To avert defeat, it would have taken a

¹ 4 Kings xxi. 13.

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whole army of Catholic martyrs, and they were not forthcoming.

It was the old story of the choice of the line of least resistance, the old method beloved of "the hovering temporiser," of craven acquiescence in things which are imagined to be right and known to be wrong. In Scotland as in England there were found

the temporisers or schismatics who kept the faith but frequented the [Protestant] churches, and the open Catholics who braved fine and imprisonment and refused to go to church.¹

In Scotland even more than in England the religious touchstone was the Catholic Blessed Sacrament or the Protestant Lord's Supper,² but the percentage of Catholics who for the first half-century after the Reformation agreed to accept the latter test, and thus to proclaim their outward conformity with the new religion, was enormously greater in the northern

¹ Simpson, *Edmund Campion*, p. 204; London, 1896.

² See the remarkable evidence as regards England, *ibid.* p. 198.

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kingdom. The supreme authority on this period is the Aberdonian Jesuit, Father John Leslie, who began his labours in Scotland in 1628, and whose letters to the Jesuit General are a model of accurate observation and temperate writing.¹ Because of the very pointed reference to the north of Scotland, where Friar Francis lived and died, a fairly long passage from Leslie's "Quinquennial" Report is here transcribed. It is of surpassing interest, not only because it comes from a thoroughly well-informed writer, but also because it is the only compact survey extant of the causes of the progress of the national apostacy during the interval, 1560-1617. It is probably the best piece of religious diagnosis in the *Annual Letters* of the Scottish Jesuit Mission.

"I shall be cautious in what I say and be careful not to write down anything which the most scrupulous prudence would condemn.

"At the time of the change of religion in Scotland,

¹ Stonyhurst MSS. Translated from the Latin and printed by Father Forbes Leith, S.J., in *Memoirs of Scottish Catholics*, i., pp. 17 *sqq.*; London, 1909.

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as soon as infidelity had triumphed over the true faith, the persecution was so violent that very few had the courage to profess themselves Catholics openly. In compliance with the laws of parliament and the tyranny of public opinion, and in consequence of the ignorance or carelessness or cowardice of some of the ecclesiastical order, it became customary with Catholics to attend heretical worship on stated days; and once a year, though they did not actually receive what is called the Lord's Supper, they pretended to do so. Taking their places at the table of destruction [desecration?]¹ and lifting the bread to their lips, they secretly let it fall to the ground, and taking the cup of the Calvinists in their hands made believe to drink; and they did not feel that in doing this, they were doing anything very wrong.

"A great many went still further, when the compulsion was unusually severe, and not only subscribed on oath the Calvinist Articles of Faith,² but received the Supper in reality, taking advantage of the remissness of some of the priests, who did not reprove this

¹ Father Forbes Leith prints "destruction."

² *i.e.* the *Knoxian* Confession of Faith (Mary, 1560, c. 1); Knox, *Hist.*, folio ed., pp. 239 *sqq.* The *Westminster* Confession afterwards became law (William and Mary, 1690, c. 7). Strange to say, though the two Confessions differ considerably, both are in equal force as the Statute Law of Scotland. Cf. Fleming and Millar, *Acts Parl. Scot.*, 1424-1707, pp. 22, 212; "by Authority," Edinburgh, 1908.

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detestable insincerity and impiety as sharply as they should have done.

“Thus from the date of the overthrow of religion to the year 1617, there were very few Catholics to be found in Scotland who were not guilty of this compliance; while in the north, where the Catholics were in the majority, it is certain that there were not more than eight.”

There was a very marked improvement from 1617 onwards, due to Fathers William and James Lindsay and Patrick Stickel, Jesuit missionaries.¹

NOTE ON THE ABOVE REPORT

By “the laws of parliament,” Father Leslie means two main Acts, (1) the Act of Abolition of the Mass, (2) the Act of Abolition of the Jurisdiction of the Pope. Both Acts were at the outset null and void, neither having ever received the Royal Assent of Queen Mary, but in course of time both became law by prescription or “use and wont.” The Act against the Mass was repealed by the Statute Law Revision Act (6 Edward VII. c. 38), which received the Royal Assent on 4th August, 1906. Up to this date, the Mass was, by Statute, illegal in Scotland. The Act against the Pope remains unrepealed, though it has fallen into desuetude and is practically dead. See the two Acts in Thomson, *Acts Parl. Scot.*; Knox, *Hist.*, folio ed., pp. 254 sq. Cf. Fleming and Millar, *op. cit.*, pp. xxvi., 38.

¹ *Ibid.*

APPENDIX C

WANTED, A HISTORY OF THE ABERDEEN REFORMATION

As has been said above, the history of the Reformation in the north-east of Scotland has yet to be written. Bishop Leslie of Ross has not done it. An abortive attempt was made many years ago by a writer in the *Aberdeen Observer*.¹ The articles were unsigned, but when they appeared in book form, the author stood revealed as the great historian and archæologist, Dr Joseph Robertson.² On this one occasion an aggressive and acrimonious Protestantism has taken the place of the writer's habitual solicitude for the support of contemporary documents and has deprived his work of all historical value.

¹ April-June, 1837.

² *History of the Reformation of Aberdeen*; Aberdeen, 1887.

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Power, Matthew A.,
1857-1926.

The protomartyr of
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